A DIALOGUE

Between a Quaker and his Neighbour in HERTFORD, about the MURDER of *Sarah Stout*, *In vindicam of her, & showing the way murdered by ditto.*

Mrs. Sarah Stout.

30 Sept. 1699.

Quaker. THee art an early man to day, methinks Neighbour, to have been abroad, and coming back already.

Neigh. I must be so now; I have been to see my folks at work in the field; for he that will have business go forward, must be both at the beginning and end of it himself, or else it won't do: And the Weather of late has been pretty catching, which makes me willing to improve my time as well as I can; and according to the antient Proverb, *To make Hay while the Sun shines.*

Qua. Thou art in the right on't, and I commend thee for thy industry: Well, will come in, and smoke a pipe of Tobacco?

Neigh. I don't care if I do; for now I have set my folks to work, I am a little at leisure; besides I have a mind to talk with you.

Qua. With all my heart, Neighbour: Well, what is it thou wouldst talk with me about?

Neigh. About! Why, I would ask you, What's the best news? for I know no man must hear it first of there be any, your business calls you so much abroad.

Qua. Why truly Neighbour, as to news, I know none; for tho' I can't, as they say, but hear a great deal, yet I seldom regard it, for, there is scarce one report in twenty, that is to be credited.

Neigh. Nay, that's true enough: But what I intended was, What do you hear about the Tryal of the Gentlemen for the murder of Mrs. *Sarah Stout*? for it makes a great noise in the world, I assure you: I suppose you have heard it.

Qua. No, I didn't; for I was out of Town then, or else I believe I thou'd. But I have read the Printed Account of it, which I suppose is truth, because it is attested by the Judge.

Neigh. Yes, for it is, for I have read the Book, and heard the Tryal from the beginning to the end. Well, since you have read it, what do you say to that Tryal?

Qua. Why, I say, the perfons indicted for that Murder, were every one acquitted.

Neigh. That's true enough every body knows: But do you think they were acquitted fairly, or not?

Qua. Tis none of my place to censure the proceedings of the King's Courts of Justice; I believe the King directs Justice may be impartially administred, and I believe no man can find fault with the choice of the best Judges. But after all, to be plain with thee, I am of an Opinion *Sarah Stout* was murder'd.

Neigh. If the murder'd her self, she was murder'd; for that your words are equivocal: Do you think she was murder'd by the Gentlemen that were try'd for it?

Qua. Wou'dst have me to condemn those whom the Law has acquitted? Or, is't not possible she may be murder'd, and yet no murder'd by them? Or, is't not possible she may be murder'd, and yet no murder'd by them? And as to her murdering her self, I believe nothing of it.

Neigh. That she was found dead in the water, that's plain; and if she did not throw her self in, she was thrown in by some body else: But there's no such thing appears, and therefore I believe she drowned her self.

Qua. What reason hath thee to think so?

Neigh. Reason enough: For first, That she was not murder'd for Money, appears plainly, because there was 1x Pounds found in her Pocket-book, which was taken up out of the water; and therefore it was not done by when she was taken up out of the water; and therefore it was not done by Thieves or Robbers; for they would have taken away her Money at least, if they had not taken her too. Nor did it appear on the Tryal, that Mr. Stout had any Bonds or Mortgages of hers in his hands, by which he might make any advantage: Nor had she got her with Child, by which any shame might have been prevented. And therefore, since he could have no interest in it, why should it be supposed he did it at all? Nay, there had been kindness past between 'em that day, and in all probability might have continued, if he don't hear of any quarrel between 'em, that might give him any distaste, or provoke him to fuch a barbarous villainy: And to think that a Gentleman of her own Sex, and a young woman that had a kindness for him, meerly for murder's sake, should murder her, is a monstrous thing.

Qua. Friend, I think, that *Sarah Stout* was murder'd by Persons, and *I* have already told thee, that *I* have nothing to say, either to Accuse, or *I* have already told thee, that *I* have nothing to say, either to him or the others that were indicted for her murder, for the Law has acquitted them, or otherwise, I could easily answer all that hath hitherto been urged by thee, why I would not have an interest in her Death, tho' it did not appear in Court; that some men are so tenacious of receiving an affront, that many have been kill'd for giving it. Nay, the very kindnesses that some persons bestow, has been the occasion of their death: and the refusing to do such kindnesses, has been the occasion of them, has procur'd the death of others. Tis there might be something desir'd of *Sarah*, that she was not willing to grant, is what might be, tho' she did not think it proper to make any one acquainted with it; and that upon her refusal, might provoke any one ashamed of it, to revenge, to such persons as made no conficience of it as a sufficient ground of revenge, to such persons as made no conficience of it as a sufficient ground of revenge, to such persons as made no conficience of it as a sufficient ground of

ry things: he'll lis his thoughts to two or three Friends, and they promise to assist him, out of a principle of generosity (as they think) to serve their friend, which no money could have oblig'd 'em to do: I have heard of such things that have been done; and whether or no great hazards have been run for a Friend, I'd why not in this case? There is a famous Instance of this in K. Charles the Second's time: One Maslon was accus'd of having a hand in a Plot against the Government, and was order'd to be carried down to York, in order to be try'd, and condemn'd: He had eight Life-guard-men to carry him down; but one Blood, and three of his companions, who had a particular kindness for Maslon, went after the Life-guardmen, kill'd two or three of them, and rescued the prisoner. Upon this Blood was try'd for his life, and acquitted by a Jury, of which might be much eafier effected, and better concealed; and yet the thing was undertaken and effected, out of love to their friend. And, as to what the thought is to unanswerable, to wit, That unless they were mad, or out of their wits, they would never have exposed themselves by discourling as they did to publickly; to that I have sufficient answer; First, That they did to discourse, there is the positive testimony of two persons upon Oath. Secondly, Grant the prisoners themselves less in part deserve what was laid to their charge, in page 41 of the printed Tryal, Thirdly I might say these words, My friend may be as mad her; but for that it with saying, It was in jocular conversation. But Thirdly, Notwithstanding their denying, It, and making their publick discourling thus, a pit of Scotch Snuff (which by the way, might be one reason of their talking so publickly) yet the Judge in his charge to the Jury, feems not to make the least question of the words being spoken, as I think indeed he had no reason, and tells the Jury with his Lordship, Strange words, strange words, very strange expressions; and so leaves it to the Jury, which was all that he could do. So that I do not find, that those words is disbelieved by any, or, That her business was done. That seems to me to be an end of her concerning, that, That she was at there but a little time, even much to be by this time. Were at all invalidated: And I am sure thee and I must own, that (as the Judge said) They were very strange expressions, considering the time when they were spoken.

Now, But does it not plainly appear, that a melancholy humour, or distracted person, could do so? And, might he not in a melancholy humour, lying under some great temptation, fling her felt into the water, and so be drowned?

Qua. I cannot deny, indeed, but that such a thing might be; but there is a great deal of difference between what might be, and what was: For no such thing was prov'd: It did not appear she was melancholy, by her finding for S. C. to dinner; nor inviting him afterwards to supper; nor by the care she took to have a fire in his chamber, and his bed well warm'd. But as to her being at any time of a melancholy humour, or distracted person. And as to her being drowned, that neither is not so evident, for it appears that there was no water in her body; and it is a common opinion, that when persons are thrown into the water dead, they won't have so much as one drop of water out, which are such diverting of opinions in that case, I will not be positive therein.

Neigh. But I think nothing could be plainer, or more clearly, than that Mrs. Sarah was in love with Mr. Carlile would willingly have been admitted into bed with him that night; but he refusing to comply with her, and going to his lodging at Mr. Barefoot's, she went and drowned her self. So that here is not only her melancholy proved, but the cause of it likewise: And I have heard, that love melancholy is the most dangerous.

Qua. I do not see this so clearly made out, as thou seemest to imagine. Sarah was a young woman, and of a good fortune; and if the Prisoners have had any Criminal Love for her, it was honourable enough to be had, without courting a married man: And yet, ev'n if she had been so for left to her self, as to have done that, I have heard that perhaps he has had a greater kindness for the female Sex, than to let any of 'em make away themselves for denying 'em what might be granted, and yet do no sin: But, it does not appear to me, that he treated her at that rate as to cause her to despair of obtaining such a kindness from him: It indeed he had told her (as I think if she had been so, he might very well have done) that he could not have that kindness from her, and therefore such a thing of him; that she made her self thereby a shame to her Sex, a scandal to her Friends, and a reproach to her Relations; that there were reasons enough to disswade her from it; that for his own part, he was a married man, and upon that account could not gratify her inclinations. Or, if he had said to her, as another good man did, on the like occasion, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* And to her saying, that might be done without sin or offence, that could not but suffice in her eternal ruin, if her desires should be gratified; and that however they might think to conceal it from the eye of the World, yet that their wickedness would be open to the omniscient eye of the heavenly King, Sarah would have had no reason to think, he would have had some reason to despair of obtaining her ends of him, (if any such thing he had) But nothing appears to me, the case was quite otherwise: and Sarah's condition is reason to hope, than to despair, by those Topicks that were said to her that night; for, the Objections were only, that it was an ill thing that they should him to use so his lodging place, That the family there he was so obliged to, was a Religious one here, That he thought it not handsome under their circumstances, and in probability, provoke the censure of the Town and Country; That therefore they would not say, whatever his inclination otherwise might be. Now I appeal to the whether there be any thing in their Objections that might cause Sarah to despair of the gratifying such desires of her's? Here was no positive denyal, no unkind of the unlawfulness of it, in such there is such an ardency which rendered it not convenient that they should grant it at present. Now, had Sarah been all of this was unreasonable to be expected, what occasion had she to despair of obtaining what it was, by the discreet? For my part, according as this appears to me, I see none. And therefore, if she did make away her self (which I can by no means think) out of a despair of not obtaining what in the discreet of him; I must do the man that justice (as I have already told thee) to declare, That in my opinion he was no occasion of it.

Neighb. But since you believe that the Gentleman gave her no occasion to despair of obtaining her ends from him; and consequently that she had no reason to make away her self, which you believe she did not; I say then, what reason you have to think, that he should murder her, who, as you suppose, gave her to much hopes of obtaining her desires another time?

Qua. I know not what reason thee has to ask me such a question, for I never said that I thought he murder'd her, nor any other of the persons indicted for it. I do indeed believe she did not murder her self, because I see no reason I have to think so; and I have shew'd thee that those reasons alledged, are not sufficient to enable me to change my opinion. And I affirm then, that those circumstances relating to the person indicted, that to me look very suspicious. There is one thing that I thing was of vye a great deal of light into this business, which I indeed wonder should have escaped them, neither by the Judges, the King's Counsel, nor the Grand Jury. But yet when I consider how long that Tryal lasted, and what great variety of Evidence there was, it is no wonder if all that something might be omitted; but that which I intended was this. The maid remembers, for about a fortnight before the Tryal) all that Sarah Walker depofes, That when she went up stairs, to warm the bed, she left her mistress and S. C. in the room together; and about a quarter of an hour after, she heard the door thut, and when she came down, there was neither of them in the house. Now, methinks it would have been neceffary to have enquir'd, Whether Sarah went out with him; and if so, how far, and where they parted? For Sarah Walker fays nothing of hearing the door thut, but once; and then she thought she went out with him: Now I cannot but think, that account of this leaving her, might have given much more light into the matter. But being omitted at the Tryal, I only mention this, as my particular thoughts. However I cannot be satisfied at all about the Tryal, more especially since I have read the Relation of Herford. There were found many parcels of which, the Author, after having Learnedly handled the point, closes with his Sentiments of the death, and two strange remarks in the Tryal, viz.

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